

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE CUMBERLAND FIRE DISTRICT

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2015 7:30PM

CUMBERLAND TOWN HALL 45 BROAD STREET CUMBERLAND, RI

The meeting was called to order at 7:30pm

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Lemois, Commissioners Koutsogiane, Matta, Parent, Ouellette, Champagne and Scullin

There was a moment of silence in memory of Treasurer Robert Murray's mom.

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS: Chairman Lemois announced that Commissioner Champagne would be the Chairman of the Finance Committee. He also appointed Town of Cumberland Finance Director Brian Silvia as a non-voting member.

CONSENT AGENDA: Approval of minutes of January 13, 2015

APPROVAL MOVED BY COMMISSIONER CHAMPAGNE, SECOND BY COMMISSIONER [MATT](#)A PASSED 7-0

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION TO ADJOURN INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION MOVED BY COMMISSIONER KOUTSOGIANE, SECOND BY COMMISSIONER CHAMPAGNE. PASSED 7-0

MOTION TO RETURN TO OPEN SESSION MOVED BY COMMISSIONER KOUTSOGIANE, SECOND BY CHAMPAGNE. PASSED 7-0

Chairman Lemois asked for the minutes [of the](#) section A of the executive session to be sealed as it dealt specifically [with](#) a personnel issue.

MOTION TO SEAL MOVED BY COMMISSIONER [PARENT](#), SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER [PARENT](#) PASSED 7-0.

Chairman Lemois explained the second part of the executive session was concerning the signing of a settlement agreement over a grievance concerning the aforementioned personnel issue and that the vote would be in open session.

Commissioner Scullin asked why this didn't go to the Personnel Committee. Chairman replied that, as it was discussed by the full committee, that wasn't needed. Commissioner Scullin stated that he felt it should be reviewed before we give the house away. Chairman Lemois noted that there wasn't any financial cost to signing the agreement.

Commissioner Koutsogiane noted that, as it is written, if there isn't an agreement on the issue within thirty days, the agreement would dissolve and we would be back at square one.

MOTION TO APPROVE CHAIRMAN TO SIGN GRIEVANCE [SETTLEMENT](#) AGREEMENT MOVED BY COMMISSIONER CHAMPAGNE SECOND BY COMMISSIONER OUELLETT**E** PASSED 6-1 COMMISSIONER SCULLIN VOTING NAY.

OLD BUSINESS

A. R2015-04 Relating to work assignments/schedules

Chairman Lemois explained that Commissioner Koutsogiane requested this [resolution](#) be placed on the agenda for reconsideration. He gave the floor to the Commissioner.

Commissioner Koutsogiane expressed that though he voted for the resolution, he now thinks the treasurers and tax collectors should be able to work from home. He gave a few reasons: [that Treasurers have full time jobs, that they have been providing the service and the necessary/requested information by working from home with flexible hours, that it is an electronic age that permits the same, that we have already lost one treasurer, and that we only will be doing this for the next four \(4\) months, He corrects his request to only apply to the treasurer](#)

After a brief silence, Chairman Lemois ruled that as there wasn't a second to the motion, the motion dies.

There was additional discussion as to the need for the Chair to actually ask for a second. The Chair said he would consider a vote to overrule the Chair.

MOTION TO OVERRULE THE CHAIRMAN MOVED BY COMMISSIONER OUELLETTE, SECOND BY COMMISSIONER SCULLIN. ROLE CALL VOTE: SCULLIN/YES, KOUTSOGIANE/YES, MATTA/NO, CHAMPAGNE/NO, PARENT/NO, OUELLETTE/YES, CHAIR VOTED YES PASSED 4-3

MOTION TO RECONSIDER AND OVERTURN R2015-04 MOVED BY COMMISSIONER KOUTSOGIANE, SECOND BY COMMISSIONER SCULLIN. PASS 7-0

Commissioner Ouellette suggested that we allow any public input. Tax Collector Joy Sullivan stated that, with her full time job, she is unable to work at HQ any more hours and feels she should be able to continue to do work from home. She also stated that she doesn't feel she was given enough time to discuss this with acting Finance Director Tom Bruce. Treasurer Robert Murray indicated that he has been able to complete his job while working at home and at times from work and that he should be able to continue to do so. Mr. Murray also [described](#) a need for more communication.

There [were](#) additional comments from Commissioners Koutsogiane and Scullin along the same lines of support for allowing work to be done at home.

Commissioner Ouellette express her concerns with the professionalism of the District. A lot of time was invested in setting up work spaces for the treasurers. There was discussion on whether to make these changes on July 1, 2015. Commissioner Champagne does not believe we should be doing business out of people's homes and firmly believes in running the District professionally. Commissioner Koutsogiane suggested that moving the employees to work from HQ with four months left would cause undue strain.

Chairman Lemois stated that he believes that we need to start the merger of the 14 million dollar finance department now, not on July 1, 2015. He expressed understanding for the changes this will cause in current employees' lives. He further explained that he knows the [current employees being discussed performed](#) the jobs very well in the past; but their jobs have changed. They changed when the Town voted to have the districts merge, and they changed even more on November 10, 2015 when the new District was legally formed and the four former districts were dissolved.

Chairman Lemois asked Finance Director Bruce if he had met with the employees. Mr. Bruce replied that he [has met with them up to](#) ninety minutes with each individual. Chairman added that if there was any way for the District to work with an individual's schedule he is sure Mr. Bruce will try.

Chairman called for a voice vote; Motion to reconsider and overturn R2015-04 dies, 5-2 Commissioners Koutsogiane and Scullin voting in the affirmative.

B. R2015-01 Relating to the position of Finance Director

Chairman Lemois asked if we could use this time for the acting Finance Director to give us an update. Mr. Bruce reviewed several issues including: a competitive bid for payroll services for June, that he is writing the specification for the RFQ for the auditing services as required by the State DOR and he reviewed **why** he felt that merging funds was not the best practice until the end of the fiscal year. He will also be bidding out for the District's banking business as required by state law.

Chairman Lemois thanked Mr. Bruce and **turned** the discussion to the appointment of Mr. Bruce. He noted that the resolution was given to the personnel committee and asked for Chairman Matta's input. Chairman Matta indicated that the Personnel Committee had met prior to the full committee meeting and there was positive input received for the appointment by Chairman Lemois. No other testimony was offered. The subcommittee discussed the appointment and voted 2-0 (Commissioner Parent was absent) to report to the Full Committee with the recommendation **for** approval.

Commissioner's Scullin and Koutsogiane commented on their disagreement with the cost per hour for the Finance Director's services. They felt that we could do this in house.

Chairman Lemois noted that the cost of the current treasurers is very similar per hour with the Finance Director's services and that his services are a considerable amount more than the current treasurers. Also the requirements of the District to merge the finances is larger than any other current employee has been exposed to prior to this time.

MOTION TO HIRE MR. THOMAS BRUCE TO PROVIDE SERVICES AS THE FINANCE DIRECTOR WAS MOVED BY COMMISSIONER **MATTA**, SECOND BY COMMISSIONER OUELLETTE. THE MOTION PASSED 5-2 WITH COMMISSIONERS SCULLIN AND KOUTSOGIANE VOTING NAY.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Chairman Lemois reported that the negotiations have started and that the atmosphere is positive.

B. R2015-10 MOA for 24 hour shifts

Chairman Lemois explained the 24 hour shifts and the need. Also noted that 2 of the 4 stations were already working this schedule. Chief Finlay rose and spoke in support of the MOA. He has worked with this schedule for some time now at station 4 and all is going well.

It was noted that this is a retroactive resolution as this was to be voted on at the cancelled meeting of 1/27/15 and that the change took effect 2/1/2015 so there wouldn't be any cost to the district.

MOTION TO GIVE THE CHAIRMAN APPROVAL TO SIGN THE MOA ON 24 HOUR SHIFTS WAS MOVED BY COMMISSIONER CHAMPAGNE, SECOND BY COMMISSIONER PARENT AND PASSED 6-1. COMMISSIONER SCULLIN VOTING NAY.

C. R2015-11 Relating to promotional procedures

Chief Finlay described that there is an opening for Captain at Station 5 and the Local was in agreement to standardizing the promotional procedure for the four stations so as to allow for a larger pool of qualified candidates to apply. Chairman Lemois asked how many are qualified now vs upon passage of the resolution. Chief Finlay reported that currently there are 3 candidates qualified and with the MOA there would be 12. It was noted that the men are truly after the best candidate allowing the "competition" to be expanded.

MOTION TO ALLOW THE CHAIRMAN TO SIGN THE MOA MOVED BY COMMISSIONER CHAMPAGNE, SECOND BY OUELLETIE AND PASSED 7-0

D. Settle under Executive Session section

E. R2015-13 Pertaining to heating system at HQ

Chief Finlay reported that the heating system at HQ was 20 years old and parts were not available. He used the State's approved vendor list and requested quote receiving two; with The Gas Doctor the lowest responsible bidder at \$6,816.90. It was noted that this would be paid for in full by the budget for Station 4 and come from the building repair line item.

MOTION TO AWARD BID TO THE GAS DOCTOR MOVED BY COMMISSIONER CHAMPAGNE, SECOND BY COMMISSIONER OUELLETTE, PASSED 7-0

F. R2015-14 Pertaining to a legal bill for Ratcliffe

Chairman explained that Station 2 had hired and approved this cost for their representation during the theft issue. This was that bill. The funds would come from the budget for Station 2 and from the legal line item.

MOTION TO APPROVE PAYMENT MOVED COMMISSIONER SECOND BY COMMISSIONER OUELLETIE PASSED 7-0

G. R2015-15 Pertaining to the purchase of a video camera

This was approved in December. Though the cost doesn't cause it to go through the approval process at the time, the idea passed and approved Commissioner Koutsogiane requested that the full committee be presented with the cost.

MOTION TO APPROVE PURCHASE MOVED BY COMMISSIONER CHAMPAGNE SECOND BY COMMISSIONER KOUTSOGIANE AND PASSED 7-0

PUBLIC INPUT

Mr. Art Lambi of Deborah Drive spoke as well as Mr. David Raymond.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION TO ADJOURN MOVED BY COMMISSIONER CHAMPAGNE SECOND BY COMMISSIONER PARENT PASSED 7-0

Submitted by

Debra Auclair